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*FACTORS RELATED TO:*

# THE COLLEGE PLANS OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

MAY 1960

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
DIVISION OF RESEARCH IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
The State Education Department
Division of Research in Higher Education

# Factors Related to the College Plans of High School Seniors

By

Philip A. Cowen, Director
Division of Research in Higher Education

May 1960

# FOREWORD

The following report is a significant one in terms of planning for higher education. Its chief finding is that an increasing proportion of high school seniors are making, and carrying out, plans for continuing their formal education. Taken in conjunction with the increasing number of high school graduates, the total effect is even more significant. By 1963 the marked increase in college-age population will require expanded faculties and facilities in higher education.

Though the number of seniors continuing their education is impressive, the explosion of knowledge and skill they will generate is the most significant prospect of all.

Lorne H. Woollatt
Assistant Commissioner
for Research

May 1960

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## Factors Related to the College Plans of High School Seniors

### Introduction

Previous studies of the plans of high school seniors in New York State have been made in 1953[1] and 1956.[2] Each study differs somewhat from the other one.

The 1953 study placed emphasis on the economic factors connected with college attendance: parents' income was related to expected expenses in college. The coverage of students was complete in 11 selected counties of the State.

The 1956 study dealt with college facilities and the plans of nearly 50,000 high school seniors (42 percent of the State total) in schools selected so as to represent all geographic areas of the State. For the first time a single measure of pupils' ability was available--the New York State Scholastic Ability Test.

The present study was initiated in order to accomplish three purposes:

1. To continue an appraisal of the percentage of high school seniors who seek higher education,

2. To appraise the success of applicants in gaining admission to their "college of first choice," and

3. To appraise the problem of multiple applications for admission to college.

The first of these purposes is important because of the rapid changes that are taking place in society. Not only is the number of high school graduates increasing year by year, but the percentage of high school graduates who continue their education is also increasing. It is essential to keep a close check on the extent of change from time to time.

The second and third purposes, above, were not included in either of the earlier studies. Appraisal of the success applicants have in gaining admission to the college of first choice is important as the pressure for admission grows with the increasing number of applicants. It is a commonly held feeling that certain colleges enjoy a "prestige" among applicants which results in the rejection of many applicants but that opportunities for admission exist in other institutions which may not enjoy the same degree of popularity. The so-called popularity may be based more upon fiction than fact.

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[1] Crucial Questions About Higher Education, Albany, State University of New York, 1955, 85 pp.

[2] Needs and Facilities in Higher Education in New York State, Albany, State Education Department, 1957, 124 pp.

High school seniors are likely to file applications with more and more colleges as the pressure for college admission grows with the increasing number of applicants. The problem of multiple applications poses an extra burden upon high schools which have to furnish transcripts and recommendations and the colleges are placed in a peculiar dilemma. Over the years colleges have been able to judge by experience the percentage of their acceptances in the spring that will enroll in September. But with an increase in multiple applications and acceptances per student, a college may find itself with either more or less than the number of freshmen expected. This situation carries with it problems of housing, both residential and academic, faculty staffing, and finance.

In all three studies several common elements occur: the ability of pupils, the achievement of pupils, and the socio-economic background of pupils. The present study includes an item not used before: an index of pupil participation in extra-curricular or leadership activities. Methodology for this study is described in Appendix A together with an account of the follow-up study to determine the extent to which seniors carried out their plans.

## Plans of Seniors

This study describes the plans of 19,648 high school seniors who were to be graduated in June 1958. Their plans are summarized in Table 1. Combining public and private school seniors shows that more than two-thirds (68 percent) of the total group planned to continue their education. Comparable percentages obtained from previous studies are: 48 percent in 1953,[3] and 58 percent in 1956.[3] Thus, there has been a gain of 20 percentage points in five years in the "continuing education" rate. These percentages include all kinds of post-secondary institutions and seniors whose intention to continue their education was definite as well as probable.

The 68 percent of public and private high school seniors who planned to continue their education divide as shown in Table 2 according to kind of institution preferred. Only in the case of seniors who selected four-year or more institutions is it practicable to trace the "college-going rate." The proportions of seniors planning to attend four-year colleges were 31 percent in 1953, 40 percent in 1956, and 50 percent in 1958. The gain in four-year college-going rate is 19 percentage points in five years.

Various complicating factors prevent citing a statewide college-going rate, for two-year public colleges, which could be used as a basis of estimating future enrollment in New York State. It will be seen in Table 2 that 8 percent of the seniors included in this study planned to attend two-year colleges. The public two-year colleges in New York have a comparatively recent history; they have been largely restricted to terminal programs; they have been restricted in enrollment by statute and by the size of their physical plants; and they have been comparatively high cost to students.

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[3] See footnotes 1 and 2.

Table 1

Plans of High School Seniors at the Time of Graduation
New York State - 1958

(Percentages rounded)

| Plans | Public school seniors | Private school seniors | Both groups |
|---|---|---|---|
| To continue education | | | |
| Definitely | 53% | 68% | 55% |
| Probably | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| Sub-total | 66 | 81 | 68 |
| Not continuing education | 34 | 19 | 32 |
| Total percent | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Number | 16 956 | 2 692 | 19 648 |

Table 2

Number and Percentage Distribution of Public and Private High School Seniors According to Kind of Higher Institution Preferred - 1958

| Kind of institution | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Four-year of more college | 9 786 | 50% |
| Two-year college | 1 524 | 8 |
| Nondegree institution[1] | 2 050 | 10 |
| Not continuing education | 6 288 | 32 |
| Total | 19 648 | 100 |

[1] Such as: Hospital schools of nursing, private business schools, schools of cosmetology, and the like.

In Orange County Community College, which has both a continuing and a terminal program, the number of full-time freshmen enrolled from Orange County has been approximately 20 percent of the number of Orange County high school graduates for the past five years. In contrast, California has a long history of public junior colleges; these colleges in general have comprehensive programs and they do not charge tuition. The full-time junior college-going rate in California is about 50 percent of the number of high school graduates. Rates of 16 and 20 percent have been used in estimating the need for community college facilities in New York State. It may be only a few years before a higher rate becomes justified.

The increasing four-year college-going rate is a continuation of a long-term trend. It reflects the continuing demand of youth for education beyond high school and also the demand of employers for college educated personnel. The overall figure, however, covers up important details that will be shown in the analysis that follows.

## Factors Related to Plans

A larger proportion of private high school seniors plan to continue their education (81 percent) than of public high school seniors (66 percent).

Participation in activities. Because many college admissions officers consider participation in "leadership" activities a significant item in the consideration of an applicant's credentials, an inquiry along this line was made of guidance counsellors regarding each senior. Seniors were classified as follows:

(1) Outstanding participants,
(2) The large middle group, and
(3) Nonparticipants.

The seniors were classified by counsellors into the above three groups as follows:

| Participation group | Percentage in each group | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Public school | Private school | Both |
| (1) Outstanding | 23% | 27% | 24% |
| (2) Middle | 51 | 57 | 53 |
| (3) Nonparticipants | 26 | 16 | 23 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| N = | 16 667 | 2 604 | 19 271 |

The primary significance of the figures shown above is the fact that counsellors adhered rather well to the definitions prescribed for classification.

A very strong positive relationship appears to exist between a high or low rating on participation in activities and plans to continue education as shown in Table 3.

Of the public high school seniors who definitely planned to continue their education, 34 percent were outstanding participants in activities in contrast with 15 percent who were nonparticipants. On the other hand, of the seniors who were not planning to continue their education, only 9 percent were outstanding participants in contrast with 40 percent who were nonparticipants.

The same basic relationship holds true with seniors in private high schools but to a slightly lesser degree.

Participation of seniors in activities has a strong positive relationship to ability as measured by I.Q.; to achievement as measured by rank-in-class; to the number of years of planned college attendance; to the socio-economic level of the family as measured by the extent of fathers' education; to the number of college applications submitted; and to the number of acceptances received for college admission.[4]

Girls tend to be outstanding participants in activities somewhat more than boys. There is some evidence of differences in participation according to geographical location but the nature of the sample of schools participating does not warrant a firm conclusion on this point.

Other factors. Previous studies have documented rather fully the positive relationship between plans of seniors for college attendance and high ability, high achievement and socio-economic status. Details of these relationships are not reported in this study.[4] They continue to exist as previously reported.[5] It is sufficient to state that no important changes have occurred since 1953--each of these factors continues to be positively related to the continuance of education beyond high school.

However, it may be important to report the continued loss of potential talent to higher education. Of the 3,371 seniors who were reported having I.Q.'s over 120, 12 percent were not continuing their education. Of the 4,428 seniors who ranked in the top quarter of their graduating classes, 14 percent were not continuing their education. And of the 4,507 seniors who were rated as outstanding participants in activities, 14 percent were not continuing their education. Even though these three groups overlap in constituency, the loss of talent through stopping education with high school is significant.

As documented in previous studies,[6] the plans of seniors who terminated their education with high school fall into the expected pattern of work, military service and marriage. Seniors were not asked why they were not continuing their education.

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[4]Detailed statistics are on file in the Research Offices.

[5]See footnotes 1 and 2.

[6]See footnotes 1 and 2.

Table 3

Percentage Distribution of Public and Private High School Seniors by Plans for College and According to Participation in High School Activities

| Participation in school activities | College plans of public school seniors (N=16,677) | | | College plans of private school seniors (N=2,604) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Definitely | Probably | Not going | Definitely | Probably | Not going |
| Outstanding | 34% | 13% | 9% | 31% | 18% | 16% |
| Average | 51 | 53 | 51 | 56 | 65 | 58 |
| None | 15 | 34 | 40 | 13 | 17 | 26 |
| All groups | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| N = | 8 878 | 1 986 | 5 813 | 1 551 | 367 | 686 |

## College of First Choice

One reason for asking the seniors who participated in this study to name the "college of first choice," if they were planning to continue their education was to appraise the extent to which their aspirations were realistic. Seniors were also asked to name the college they were "most likely" to attend, and they indicated whether they had been accepted, rejected or had no reply from the college of first choice.

Public high school seniors. Sixty and one-half percent of public high school seniors who planned to continue their education named the "college of first choice"; another 5.5 percent said they were continuing but failed to name their choice. The choices of these 10,245 seniors are distributed according to the kind of institution and its location in Table 4.

In reviewing the figures shown in Table 4 it is necessary to assume that seniors who did not designate the college of first choice would have distributed themselves in the same pattern as those who did.

Seventy percent of the public school seniors who planned to continue their education designated an institution in New York State as their first choice; 30 percent designated a college in another state. Seventy-two percent of these seniors picked four-year colleges; 13 percent, two-year colleges; and 14 percent selected nondegree institutions. (Total is 99+ percent; see Table 4.)

The remaining statistics in Table 4 show the percentage of seniors in each category who thought the college they would most likely attend was the college of first choice and the percentage of acceptances received from the college of first choice.

A larger percentage of public school seniors choosing four-year colleges expected to attend New York institutions, 47 percent, than expected to attend institutions in other states, 25 percent. Yet the proportion of acceptance by first choice four-year colleges differed according to location only slightly.

A different view of the June status of seniors' applications for admission is shown in Table 5. The percentages of acceptance, rejection and no-reply refer only to the response from the college of first choice. Acceptances were received by the seniors from 74 to 76 percent of the four-year colleges. Reference to the figures in Table 4 shows that two-year and nondegree institutions were the "first choice" of comparatively few seniors.

Private high school seniors. Seventy-one percent of private high school seniors who planned to continue their education named the college of first choice; another 10 percent said they were continuing but failed to name their choice. The choices of these 1,908 seniors are distributed according to location and kind of institution in Table 6.

Again it must be assumed (as with the public high school seniors) that the missing responses would be distributed in the same proportion as the responses received.

Table 4

Percentage Distribution of Responses from Public High School Seniors Planning to Continue their Education According to Kind and Location of College of First Choice; Opinion that College of First Choice Was Most Likely College; and Acceptance from College of First Choice, June 1958 (See note below)

| Location and kind of institution | Percentage distribution of seniors according to | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | College of "first choice" | Opinion that first choice college was "most likely" | Acceptance of admission by first choice college |
| In New York State | 70% | 64.9% | 48.7% |
| 4 year private | 27 | 24 | 20 |
| 4 year public | 20 | 18 | 15 |
| 2 year private | 1 | 0.9 | 0.7 |
| 2 year public | 9 | 9 | 6 |
| Nondegree private | 13 | 13 | 7 |
| Nondegree public | * | * | * |
| Outside New York State | 29 | 23.9 | 21.7 |
| 4 year private | 20 | 16 | 15 |
| 4 year public | 5 | 4 | 3.5 |
| 2 year private | 3 | 3 | 2.5 |
| 2 year public | * | * | * |
| Nondegree private | 1 | 0.9 | 0.7 |
| Nondegree public | * | * | * |
| Total | 99+ | 89+ | 72+ |
| Number of seniors | 10 245 | 9 118+ | 7 376+ |

Note--Read this table as follows: Of each 100 seniors who planned to continue their education, 27 indicated that their first choice was a 4-year college in New York State; 24 thought the first choice college was most likely to be attended; 3 thought they would not get first choice; and 20 had been accepted as of June 1958, in the 4-year private college of their first choice.

* = Less than 0.5 percent.

Table 5

Percentage Distribution of Public School Seniors According to Status of Application to First-Choice College in June 1958

(Rounded percentages)

| Location and kind of institution | Status of application to college of first choice | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Percent[1] | | |
| | Accepted | Not accepted | No reply |
| In New York State | | | |
| 4 year private | 74 | 14 | 12 |
| 4 year public | 74 | 15 | 11 |
| 2 year private | 71 | 16 | 13 |
| 2 year public | 71 | 13 | 16 |
| Nondegree private | 56 | 29 | 15 |
| Nondegree public | 46 | 32 | 22 |
| Outside New York State | | | |
| 4 year private | 76 | 15 | 9 |
| 4 year public | 73 | 13 | 14 |
| 2 year private | 86 | 7 | 7 |
| 2 year public | 66 | 17 | 17 |
| Nondegree private | 68 | 15 | 17 |
| Nondegree public | 42 | 16 | 42 |
| Number = | 10 245 | | |

[1] Each horizontal line of percentages adds to 100 percent. Multiple applications to different kinds of institutions both in and out of New York State make it necessary to restrict the analysis of applications to those pertaining to college of first choice.

Table 6

Percentage Distribution of Responses from Private High School Seniors Planning to Continue their Education According to Kind and Location of College of First Choice; Opinion that College of First Choice Was Most Likely College; and Acceptance from College of First Choice, June 1958 (See note below)

| Location and kind of institution | Percentage distribution of seniors according to | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | College of "first choice" | Opinion that first choice college was "most likely" | Acceptance of admission by first choice college |
| In New York State | 80% | 74.7% | 58.5% |
| 4 year private | 43 | 39 | 34 |
| 4 year public | 12 | 11 | 8 |
| 2 year private | 1 | 1 | 0.7 |
| 2 year public | 2 | 1.9 | 0.8 |
| Nondegree private | 22 | 21.8 | 15 |
| Nondegree public | * | * | * |
| Outside New York State | 20 | 15.8 | 14.2 |
| 4 year private | 15 | 12 | 11 |
| 4 year public | 3 | 2 | 1.7 |
| 2 year private | 2 | 1.8 | 1.5 |
| 2 year public | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Nondegree private | * | * | * |
| Nondegree public | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 90+ | 72+ |
| Number of seniors | 1 908 | 1 717+ | 1 374+ |

Note--Read this table as follows: Of each 100 seniors who planned to continue their education, 43 indicated that their first choice college was a 4-year private college in New York State; 39 thought the first choice college was most likely to be attended; 4 thought they would not get first choice; and 34 had been accepted by the 4-year private college of first choice as of June 1958.

* = Less than 0.5 percent.

Eighty percent of these private school seniors who planned to continue their education designated an institution in New York State as their first choice; 20 percent planned to leave the State. Seventy-three percent of these seniors picked four-year colleges; 5 percent two-year colleges; and 22 percent nondegree institutions. Private school seniors choose New York State institutions somewhat more frequently than public school seniors (80% vs. 70%), and also private institutions somewhat more frequently than public school seniors (83% vs. 65%). The proportion choosing nondegree institutions exceeds the corresponding percentage of public school seniors considerably. Practically the same percentage of each group picked a four-year college as first choice.

There is considerable similarity between the overall statistics of the private and public school seniors who planned to continue their education--about 90 percent of the seniors in each group thought the college of first choice would be the one they would most likely attend, and about 72 percent had been accepted by the first choice college. Variations from these overall percentages occur with kind and location of colleges of first choice.

The status of private school seniors' applications to first choice colleges is shown in Table 7. They were more successful in obtaining acceptances from private than from public colleges, and somewhat more successful in obtaining acceptances from first choice colleges in New York State than in other states. On the contrary, public school seniors experienced about the same degree of success in obtaining acceptances from public and private first choice colleges, and slightly greater success from institutions outside New York than institutions within New York.

Implications. The relationships that have been shown to exist between first choice college, most likely college and acceptance of seniors by the first choice college point up the very satisfactory situation wherein nearly three-fourths of the college applicants had been accepted by the college of their first choice. Yet, familiarity with college admissions leads one to suggest that the first choice college of an individual may be a poor decision. Choice in many cases is not free but is limited by circumstances over which the individual has only partial control.

During the years immediately ahead, the number of high school graduates will increase substantially. Guidance procedures will need to be intensified in order to maintain the good record cited above.

## Applications for Admission to College

Very little current information is available about the number of applications for admission that high school seniors in New York State send to colleges. In an early study of applicants who were refused admission to college it was reported that "A ... serious aspect of this problem of multiple application, however, is the fact that many colleges have to pass upon the credentials of the same individuals. Considerable time is virtually wasted on the part of admissions committees as well as on the part of those who make

Table 7

Percentage Distribution of Private School Seniors According to Status of Application to First-Choice College in June 1958

(Rounded percentages)

| Location and kind of institution | Status of application to college of first choice | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Percent[1] | | |
| | Accepted | Not accepted | No reply |
| In New York State | | | |
| 4 year private | 80 | 9 | 11 |
| 4 year public | 64 | 18 | 18 |
| 2 year private | 65 | 14 | 21 |
| 2 year public | 43 | 21 | 36 |
| Nondegree private | 69 | 18 | 13 |
| Nondegree public | 40 | 60 | 0 |
| Outside New York State | | | |
| 4 year private | 72 | 13 | 15 |
| 4 year public | 57 | 22 | 21 |
| 2 year private | 77 | 6 | 17 |
| 2 year public | - | - | - |
| Nondegree private | 50 | 17 | 33 |
| Nondegree public | - | - | - |
| Number = | 1 908 | | |

[1]Each horizontal line adds to 100 percent.

application."[7] If this statement was pertinent when it was made in 1932, it will be even more applicable by 1962, when the number of applicants is expected to be greater than at any previous time.

The number of applications submitted per applicant is influenced somewhat by testing agencies which send a senior's scores to any three colleges named by the senior and also by certain high schools which limit the number of transcripts they will provide.

In a sample of 30 public high schools in New York State in 1946, there were 1,068 seniors in the upper-half of their graduating classes who filed 2,627 applications for admission to college--an average of 2.46 applications each.[8]

The 9,855 public high school seniors of 1958, included in this study, filed 23,453 applications for admission to college--an average of 2.38 applications each. Although these two samples of seniors do not represent the same high schools, they are probably adequate to indicate that the overall problem of multiple applications remained relatively constant during the last twelve years.

Even though the overall problem of multiple applications appears to be somewhat stable, certain "prestige" colleges receive and have to process a larger proportion of the multiple applications than other colleges. Thus, in the cases of these colleges multiple applications are a serious problem for the respective admissions offices.

Number of Applications

Ninety-six percent (9,855) of the 10,245 seniors in public high schools who indicated a college of first choice reported the number of applications filed. Ninety-one percent (1,741) of the 1,908 seniors in private high schools who indicated a college of first choice reported the number of applications filed. The distribution of these seniors according to the number of applications is shown in Table 8. There are only slight differences between the proportions of public and private school seniors in the number of applications--and from both types of schools 80 percent of the seniors filed three or fewer applications.

It is not feasible to attempt to analyze the application problem in terms of applicants as individuals because many seniors applied to varying numbers of institutions both in New York and in other states.

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[7] Warren W. Coxe and Philip A. Cowen, "Applicants Refused Admission by Colleges and Professional Schools of New York State," University of the State of New York Bulletin, N. 1042, April 16, 1934, p. 6.

[8] David S. Berkowitz, "Inequality of Opportunity in Higher Education," Albany, Legislative Document (1948), No. 33. Figures used here are derived from Table 62, p. 154.

Table 8

Distribution of High School Seniors According to the Number of Applications Filed for Admission to College, 1958

| Number of applications | Public high school seniors | | Private high school seniors | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| 1 | 3 606 | 36% | 589 | 34% |
| 2 | 2 267 | 23 | 463 | 26 |
| 3 | 2 040 | 21 | 353 | 20 |
| 4 | 1 159 | 12 | 185 | 11 |
| 5 | 462 | 5 | 80 | 5 |
| 6 or more | 321 | 3 | 71 | 4 |
| Total | 9 855 | 100 | 1 741 | 100 |

A distribution of the total number of applications sent by seniors to institutions in New York and in other states is shown in Table 9. Public school seniors show a greater proportion of applications sent to colleges outside New York State than private school seniors--by 10 percentage points. The average number of applications per senior whether in public or private high school was very nearly the same (2.43 and 2.38 respectively).

There are several factors which are positively related to the number of applications filed by seniors. These are listed here without statistics because most of them have been documented in previous studies.[9]

1. Seniors who rate high on participation in activities tend to file more applications each than nonparticipants.

2. Seniors who lived in Nassau and Westchester counties tend to file more applications each than seniors who lived in other counties of the State.

3. Seniors who apply to colleges outside New York State tend to file more applications each than seniors who restricted their applications to colleges in New York State. (Many seniors, however, apply to colleges both in the State and outside.)

4. Seniors who preferred colleges in other states tend to have higher ability than seniors who preferred colleges in New York State.

5. Seniors in New York City tend to apply to institutions in New York State to a greater extent than seniors who lived outside New York City.

These relationships are logical and easily explained. Students who are outstanding participants in activities tend to have superior ability and are consistent in filing the most applications each for admission to college. They seem to be seeking the "best" college opportunity.

The large majority of seniors from Nassau and Westchester counties are from families of higher than average socio-economic status and are therefore more highly motivated than the average to gain college admissions. Part of the incentive observed is devoted to making application to colleges in other states.

Seniors who seek educational opportunities outside New York State are, on the whole, also likely to be more highly motivated than those who choose to remain in New York. In the northestern states there are a large number of "prestige" institutions; many of which are in other states as well as in New York.

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[9]See footnotes 1 and 2.

Table 9

Distribution of Applications According to Location of Institution, 1958

| Location of higher institutions | Applications made by seniors from | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Public schools | | Private schools | |
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Colleges in New York State | 14 375 | 61% | 3 035 | 71% |
| Colleges in other states | 9 078 | 39 | 1 212 | 29 |
| Total number of applications | 23 453 | 100 | 4 247 | 100 |
| Number of persons | 9 855 | 100 | 1 741 | 100 |

Status of Applications

The information obtained from seniors reflected the status of their applications as of about June 1, 1958--this is shown in Table 10. The differences between the public and private school groups occur in the percentages of acceptance and rejection--about 5 percentage points in favor of the private school seniors. The difference is reflected in public school seniors receiving 1.47 acceptances per applicant as against 1.63 acceptances per private school applicant.

For the same reason that applications cannot be analyzed according to individual applicants, acceptances must be treated on a group basis. Several facets are related to acceptances--all of which are similar to the relationships cited regarding applications.

Seniors who filed the largest number of applications received the largest number of acceptances. This relationship is logical because seniors who filed the largest number of applications per person had superior qualifications.

Seniors who were rated "outstanding" on participation received proportionately more acceptances per person than nonparticipants. Again, this relationship is logical because the outstanding participants were also superior in ability and filed the largest number of applications per person.

Seniors who reported having received the largest numbers of acceptances stood highest in ability. Ability is probably the single factor given most consideration by colleges--so this relationship is as expected.

Table 10

Status of Seniors Applications as of June 1958

| Status of applications | Public school seniors | | Private school seniors | | Both groups | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Accepted | 14 508 | 62% | 2 843 | 67% | 17 351 | 63% |
| Rejected | 4 725 | 20 | 631 | 15 | 5 356 | 19 |
| No reply | 4 220 | 18 | 773 | 18 | 4 993 | 18 |
| Total number of applications | 23 453 | 100 | 4 247 | 100 | 27 700 | 100 |
| Number of persons | 9 855 | 100 | 1 741 | 100 | 11 596 | 100 |

## Summary

Answers were sought in this study to three questions as follows:

1. How much increase has there been in the upward trend of high school seniors who plan to continue their education?

Figures below are adjusted for comparability.

| Years of high school graduation | Percent of seniors planning to continue education | |
|---|---|---|
| | In four-year colleges | In all kinds of institutions |
| 1953 | 31% | 48% |
| 1956 | 40 | 58 |
| 1958 | 50 | 68 |

The above figures are based upon both private and public high school seniors. The 1953 and 1958 samples of schools do not represent all of New York State as adequately as the 1956 sample. Nevertheless, the continuing upward trend of extending education beyond high school is both unmistakable and significant. It is expected that the total percentages, at least, will continue to increase as new community colleges are started and as existing ones obtain larger facilities.

The plans of seniors for continuing their education have been known for some time to be positively related to their ability, achievement, socio-economic status, and proximity of residence to college opportunities. An index of participation in extra-class or "leadership" type activities was added to the 1958 study. Outstanding participation in activities seems to be as closely related to the intention of continuing education as the factors mentioned above.

2. To what extent do seniors obtain admission to the college of their first choice?

In general 80 to 90 percent of high school seniors in both public and private high schools, who planned to continue their education, thought that their college of first choice was the one they would most likely attend. Roughly, about three-fourths of seniors who applied for admission had been accepted by the college of first choice as of June 1958.

3. What is the nature of the problem of multiple college applications?

High school seniors who apply for admission to college send, on the average, slightly less than three applications each; there is little change in the situation since 1946. Put another way, 80 percent of the seniors who planned to continue their education filed three applications or less.

Of the seniors who apply for college admission, those in public schools tend, somewhat more than those in private schools, to apply to colleges in other states. The private school seniors received a somewhat higher rate of acceptances than public school seniors; both from colleges in New York State and from colleges in other states.

## Appendix A

### Sample, Methodology and Follow-up

Late in the school year, 1958, high school seniors were requested to furnish information about their fathers' level of education (socio-economic status), their plans following graduation, the college of first choice, and the college most likely to be attended if their plans included continuing education, the number of applications submitted for admission to college, and the status of their applications.

High school officials provided information about ability (last I.Q. on file), achievement (rank in class), and an index of participation in "leadership" activities outside of classes. All of this information is confidential with respect to the identification of pupils.

The public high schools included are those (approximately 100) participating in the Quality Measurement Project, excepting that a substitution of schools was made in New York City, and 29 private and parochial secondary schools selected at random.

The public schools participating do not constitute a random sample of public secondary schools in the State. They are not evenly distributed geographically and they include proportionately more large and wealthy districts than would be found in a random sample of school districts. The Q.M.P. group of schools is a stratified sample of the State. Nevertheless, Dr. Joseph Lev, Acting Chief, Bureau of Statistical Services, developed a statistical procedure which has been used to equate the results fairly on a geographical basis.

In each participating high school there was nearly complete information for all graduating seniors. The small number of seniors in many schools does not permit analysis of information school by school although the data from larger schools will be useful for certain case study analyses that are planned for the Quality Measurement Project.

Information was received from 16,956 seniors in public schools and from 2,692 seniors in private and parochial schools. In the fall of 1958, a 10 percent sample of the public high school seniors was drawn to determine the extent to which plans stated at the time of graduation had been carried out by fall. This sample group was sent a post card to be filled in either by the former senior or by his parent. The results obtained are shown here in tabular form.

| | |
|---|---|
| Percent of return | 80 |
| Percent to which June plans were carried out | 90 |
| Percent of seniors who planned to continue education who were attending college of first choice | 84 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Percent of seniors who planned to continue education who were attending the college thought most likely | 89 |
| Of the sample group attending college--percent holding a scholarship | 21 |
| The distribution of scholarships was: Less than $200 | 11% |
| $200 - $499 | 53% |
| $500 and over | 36% |

Of the respondents who planned to attend college but were not in college, nearly half said they "might have attended" if they had possessed sufficient funds, and nearly a fifth would have attended if they had been accepted by the "right" college. More than half of these persons indicated they "might" attend a school or college at a later time.

Considerable delay in the preparation of this report has been due to the temporary reassignment of duties following the death of Dr. Donald H. Ross, former Assistant Commissioner for Research. It was at his request that the Q.M.P. sample of public schools was used primarily because of the data that would automatically be added to the wealth of information being obtained about the schools through the Quality Measurement Project.

A copy of the forms used in this study is attached.

The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Research Office

Do Not Use These Boxes

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

Last name _____ First name _____ School _____

Home address _____ _____
(Number and street) (Place)

This is an inquiry about your plans for next year (beginning in September). Your name will not be revealed in connection with your answers. However, we may send a post card to your home this fall to find out if you are doing what you planned to do. Your best answers will be appreciated.

1. Check father's highest level of education (check one)

| | |
|---|---|
| Unknown | 0 ___ |
| Grade school | 1 ___ |
| Some high school | 2 ___ |
| High school graduate | 3 ___ |
| Did not finish high school but attended some other school | 4 ___ |
| High school graduate plus some college education | 5 ___ |
| College graduate | 6 ___ |
| Graduate or professional school after college | 7 ___ |

2. Do you plan to attend any kind of school or college this fall? (check)

Yes (definitely) __1__, Yes (probably) __2__,

No __3__.

3. If you checked NO above, what do you expect to do this fall?

_____

_____

Answer the questions below only if you have applied for admission or if you plan to attend some school or college this fall.

4. Write the name and place of the school or college that would be your first choice to attend this fall if you could be admitted.

School or college _____ Place _____

5. Have you applied to this school or college? Yes ___, No __1__. If yes, have you been accepted? __2__, Rejected? __3__, No reply __4__.

6. Write the name and place of the school or college that you think you will be most likely to attend this fall (write same if it is named above).

School or college _____ Place _____

7. Have you been accepted? ___1, Rejected? ___2, No reply? ___3.

8. Check the number of years that you plan to attend the school or college named in Item 6 above. 1 year or less ___, 2 years ___, 3 years ___, 4 years or more ___.

9. To how many schools or colleges have you applied for admission? (No.) ____.

10. How many of these are in New York State? (No.) ____. 11. In all other states? (No.) ____.

12. Of all the schools or colleges to which you applied for admission (Item 9 above):
(a) How many have notified you that they will accept you this fall? - - - - (No.) ____
(b) How many have rejected your application? - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - (No.) ____
(c) From how many have you not heard? - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - (No.) ____

The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Research Offices

High School _____ Reporting Official _____

| Col. 1. Pupil's name (In alphabetical order, by last name) | Col. 2 Sex | Col. 3 I.Q. | Col. 4 Rank | Col. 5 Participation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | |
| 5 | | | | |
| 6 | | | | |
| 7 | | | | |
| 8 | | | | |
| 9 | | | | |
| 10 | | | | |
| 11 | | | | |
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| 13 | | | | |
| 14 | | | | |
| 15 | | | | |
| 16 | | | | |
| 17 | | | | |
| 18 | | | | |
| 19 | | | | |
| 20 | | | | |

## Follow-up

Please answer either Part I or Part II; not both parts.

Part I. Answer this part if you are now attending any school or college.

a. Name of school or college _____ b. Location _____
c. Are you attending full-time? (check) ____; or part-time? (check) ____
d. Are you also working at a job? (check) Yes ____; No ____
e. Do you have a "scholarship" grant? Yes __; No __. f. If so, how much this year? $ _____

Part II. Answer this part if you are NOT now attending any school or college.

a. Under which of the following conditions, one or more, might you have attended a school or college this fall? (Check any items that apply)

1. If I had more funds ____
2. If I had a car ____
3. If I had been accepted by the right college ____
4. Any other conditions (specify) _____
5. Would not attend under any circumstances ____

b. What are you doing now? (check one)

1. Married (housewife) ____
2. Working at a job ____
3. In Armed Forces ____
4. Traveling ____
5. Staying at home ____
6. Any other answer (specify) _____

c. Do you plan to attend any school or college at some later time?
(check) Yes ____; No ____; Undecided ____

Do not sign. You will be identified by the code number.
Thanks for a prompt reply.

Use additional sheets if necessary